**Act II**

**Part 4: Inverness**

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| ***LADY MACBETH*** *enters.* |
| **LADY MACBETH**  The alcohol that got the servants drunk has made me bold. The same liquor that quenched their thirst has fired me up. Listen! Quiet! That was the owl that shrieked, with a scary “good night” like the bells they ring before they execute people. Macbeth must be killing the king right now. The doors to Duncan’s chamber are open, and the drunken servants make a mockery of their jobs by snoring instead of protecting the king. I put so many drugs in their drinks that you can’t tell if they’re alive or dead. |
| **MACBETH**  *(from offstage)* Who’s there? What is it? |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Oh no, I’m afraid the servants woke up, and the murder didn’t happen. For us to attempt murder and not succeed would ruin us. *(She hears a noise.)* Listen to that! I put the servants' daggers where Macbeth would find them. He couldn’t have missed them. If Duncan hadn’t reminded me of my father when I saw him sleeping, I would have killed him myself. |
| ***MACBETH*** *enters carrying bloody daggers.* |
| My husband! |
| **MACBETH**  I have done the deed. Did you hear a noise? |
| **LADY MACBETH**  I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Didn’t you say something? |
| **MACBETH**  When? |

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| **LADY MACBETH**  Just now. |
| **MACBETH**  As I came down? |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Yes. |
| **MACBETH**  Listen! Who’s sleeping in the second chamber? |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Donalbain. |
| **MACBETH**  *(looking at his bloody hands)* This is a sorry sight. |
| **LADY MACBETH**  That’s a stupid thing to say. |
| **MACBETH**  One of the servants laughed in his sleep, and one cried, “Murder!” and they woke each other up. I stood and listened to them, but then they said their prayers and went back to sleep. |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Malcolm and Donalbain are asleep in the same room. |
| **MACBETH**  One servant cried, “God bless us!” and the other replied, “Amen,” as if they had seen my bloody hands. Listening to their frightened voices, I couldn’t reply “Amen” when they said “God bless us!” |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Don’t think about it so much. |
| **MACBETH**  But why couldn’t I say “Amen”? I desperately needed God’s blessing, but the word “Amen” stuck in my throat. |
| **LADY MACBETH**  We can’t think that way about what we did. If we do, it’ll drive us crazy. |

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| **MACBETH**  I thought I heard a voice cry, “Sleep no more! Macbeth is murdering sleep.” Innocent sleep. Sleep that soothes away all our worries. Sleep that puts each day to rest. Sleep that relieves the weary laborer and heals hurt minds. Sleep, the main course in life’s feast, and the most nourishing. | |
| **LADY MACBETH**  What are you talking about? | |
| **MACBETH**  The voice kept crying, “Sleep no more!” to everyone in the house. “Macbeth has murdered sleep, and therefore Macbeth will sleep no more.” | |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Who said that? Why, my worthy lord, you let yourself become weak when you think about things in this cowardly way. Go get some water and wash this bloody evidence from your hands. Why did you carry these daggers out of the room? They have to stay there. Go take them back and smear the sleeping guards with the blood. | |
| **MACBETH**  I can’t go back. I’m afraid even to think about what I’ve done. I can’t stand to look at it again. | |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Coward! Give me the daggers. Dead and sleeping people can’t hurt you any more than pictures can. Only children are afraid of scary pictures. If Duncan bleeds I’ll paint the servants' faces with his blood. We must make it seem like they’re guilty. | |
| ***LADY MACBETH*** *exits. A sound of knocking from offstage* | |
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| **MACBETH**  Where is that knocking coming from? What’s happening to me, that I’m frightened of every noise? *(looking at his hands)* Whose hands are these? Ha! They’re plucking out my eyes. Will all the water in the ocean wash this blood from my hands? No, instead my hands will stain the seas scarlet, turning the green waters red. |
| ***LADY MACBETH*** *enters.* |
| **LADY MACBETH**  My hands are as red as yours, but I would be ashamed if my heart were as pale and weak. |
| *A sound of knocking from offstage.* |
| I hear someone knocking at the south entry. Let’s go back to our bedroom. A little water will wash away the evidence of our guilt. It’s so simple! You’ve lost your resolve. |
| *A sound of knocking from offstage.* |
| Listen! There’s more knocking. Put on your nightgown, in case someone comes and sees that we’re awake. Snap out of your daze. |
| **MACBETH**  Rather than have to think about my crime, I’d prefer to be completely unconscious. |
| *A sound of knocking from offstage.* |
| **MACBETH**  Wake Duncan with your knocking. I wish you could! |
| *They exit.* |

**Part 5: Inverness**

**MACDUFF** and **LENNOX** enter.

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| **MACDUFF**  Is your master awake?  ***MACBETH*** *enters*. |
| Our knocking woke him up. Here he comes. |
| **LENNOX**  Good morning, noble sir. |
| **MACBETH**  Good morning to both of you. |
| **MACDUFF**  Is the king awake, worthy thane? |
| **MACBETH**  Not yet. |
| **MACDUFF**  He commanded me to wake him up early. I’ve almost missed the time he requested. |
| **MACBETH**  I’ll bring you to him. |
| **MACDUFF**  I know the burden of hosting him is both an honor and a trouble, but that doesn’t mean it’s not a trouble just the same. |
| **MACBETH**  The work we enjoy is not really work. This is the door. |
| **MACDUFF**  I’ll wake him, because that’s my job. |
| ***MACDUFF*** *exits.* |
| **LENNOX**  Is the king leaving here today? |

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| |  | | --- | | **MACBETH**  He is. He told us to arrange it. | | **LENNOX**  The night has been chaotic. The wind blew down through the chimneys where we were sleeping. People are saying they heard cries of grief in the air, strange screams of death, and terrible voices predicting catastrophes that will usher in a woeful new age. The owl made noise all night. Some people say that the earth shook as if it had a fever. | | **MACBETH**  It was a rough night. | | **LENNOX**  I’m too young to remember anything like it. | | ***MACDUFF*** *enters, upset.* | | **MACDUFF**  Oh, horror, horror, horror! This is beyond words and beyond belief! | | **MACBETH & LENNOX**  What’s the matter? | | **MACDUFF**  The worst thing imaginable has happened. A murderer has broken into God’s temple and stolen the life out of it. | | **MACBETH**  What are you talking about? “The life”? | | **LENNOX**  Do you mean the king? |  |  | | --- | | **MACDUFF**  Go into the bedroom and see for yourself. What’s in there will make you freeze with horror. Don’t ask me to talk about it. Go look and then do the talking yourselves. | | ***MACBETH*** *and* ***LENNOX*** *exit.* | | Wake up, wake up! Ring the alarm bell. Murder and treason! Banquo and Donalbain, Malcolm! Wake up! Shake off sleep, which looks like death, and look at death itself! Get up, get up, and look at this image of doomsday! Malcolm! Banquo! Get up from your beds as if you were rising out of your own graves, and walk like ghosts to come witness this horror. Ring the bell. | | *A bell rings.* ***LADY MACBETH*** *enters.* | | **LADY MACBETH**  What’s going on? Why is that terrifying trumpet calling together everyone who’s sleeping in the house? Speak up and tell me! | | **MACDUFF**  Oh gentle lady, my news isn’t fit for your ears. If I repeated it to you, it would kill you as soon as you heard it. | | ***BANQUO*** *enters.* | | Oh Banquo, Banquo, the king has been murdered! | | **LADY MACBETH**  How horrible! What, in our own house? |  |  | | --- | | **BANQUO**  It would be a terrible event no matter where it happened. Dear Macduff, I beg you, tell us you were lying and say it isn’t so. | | ***MACBETH*** *and* ***LENNOX*** *reenter, with* ***ROSS****.* | | **MACBETH**  If I had only died an hour before this event I could say I had lived a blessed life. Because from this moment on, there is nothing worth living for. Everything is a sick joke. The graceful and renowned king is dead. The wine of life has been poured out, and only the dregs remain. | | ***MALCOLM*** *and* ***DONALBAIN*** *enter.* | | **DONALBAIN**  What’s wrong? | | **MACBETH**  You are, but you don’t know it yet. The source from which your royal blood comes has been stopped. | | **MACDUFF**  Your royal father is murdered. | | **MALCOLM**  Who did it? | | **LENNOX**  It seems that the guards who were supposed to be protecting his chamber did it. Their hands and faces were all covered with blood. So were their daggers, which we found on their pillows, unwiped. They stared at us in confusion. No one’s life should have been entrusted to them. | | **MACBETH**  And yet I still regret the anger that drove me to kill them. |   **MACDUFF**  What did you do that for? |
| **MACBETH**  Is it possible to be wise, bewildered, calm, furious, loyal, and neutral all at once? Nobody can do that. The violent rage inspired by my love for Duncan caused me to act before I could think rationally and tell myself to pause. There was Duncan, his white skin all splattered with his precious blood. The gashes where the knives had cut him looked like wounds to nature itself. Then right next to him I saw the murderers, dripping with blood, their daggers rudely covered in gore. Who could have restrained himself, who loved Duncan and had the courage to act on it? |
| **LADY MACBETH**  Help me out of here, quickly! |
| **MACDUFF**  Take care of the lady. |
| **MALCOLM**  *(speaking so that only* DONALBAIN *can hear)* Why are we keeping quiet? The two of us have the most to say in this matter. |
| **DONALBAIN**  *(speaking so that only* MALCOLM *can hear)* What are we going to say here, where danger may be waiting to strike at us from anywhere? Let’s get out of here. We haven’t even begun to weep yet—but there will be time for that later. |
| **MALCOLM**  *(speaking so that only* DONALBAIN *can hear)* And the time hasn’t come yet for us to turn our deep grief into action. |
| **BANQUO**  Take care of the lady. |
| ***LADY MACBETH*** *is carried out.* |
| **BANQUO**  When we’re properly dressed for the cold, let’s meet and discuss this bloody crime to see if we can figure anything out. Right now we’re shaken up by fears and doubts. I’m putting myself in God’s hands, and with his help I plan to fight against the secret plot that caused this treasonous murder. |
| **MACDUFF**  So will I. |
| **ALL**  So will we all. |
| **MACBETH**  Let’s get dressed quickly and then meet in the hall. |
| **ALL**  Agreed. |
| *Everyone exits except* ***MALCOLM*** *and* ***DONALBAIN****.* |
| **MALCOLM**  What are you going to do? Let’s not stay here with them. It’s easy for a liar to pretend to feel sorrow when he actually feels none. I’m going to England. |
| **DONALBAIN**  I’ll go to Ireland. We’ll both be safer if we go separate ways. Wherever we go, men will smile at us while hiding daggers. Our closest relatives are the ones most likely to murder us. |
| **MALCOLM**  We haven’t yet encountered that danger, and the best thing to do is avoid it entirely. With that in mind, let’s get on our horses. We’d better not worry about saying polite good-byes; we should just get away quickly. There’s good reason to escape when there’s no mercy to be found anymore. |
| *They exit.* |